

Message Text

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S E C R E T STATE 056236

NODIS
FOR ATHERTON FROM SAUNDERS USDEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, SF, US

SUBJECT: ATHERTON PROPOSED BACKGROUNDER

REF: JERUSALEM 531

1. WE ARE SENDING YOU THESE STAFF LEVEL SUGGESTIONS FOR
YOUR BACKGROUNDER, PENDING GUIDANCE FROM THE SECRETARY ON
MONDAY, SO THAT YOU CAN CONSIDER THEM AND GIVE US YOUR
REACTIONS BEFORE WE RUN OUT OF TIME. WE HAVE MADE SOME
ALTERATIONS ON THE BASIC THEMES. THE HEAVIER CONCENTRATION
ON THE 242 ISSUES IS INTENDED TO FORESHADOW THE BACK-
GROUNDERS AND BRIEFINGS OF MEMBERS OF CONGRESS WE WILL BE
MAKING HERE PRIOR TO THE BEGIN VISIT. YOU WILL NOTE THAT
WE WISH TO PLAY THE BEGIN VISIT AS NOT A CRUCIAL MEETING

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BUT AS AN IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE ONGOING PROCESS, FOR
REASONS SET OUT IN MY MESSAGE TO YOU ON PROPOSED STRATEGY.
WE ASSUME THAT SOME OF YOUR THEMES ARE INTENDED TO PLAY IN
JERUSALEM RATHER THAN IN CAIRO AND VICE VERSA AND IN THE
TEXT BELOW WE NOTE WHAT OUR UNDERSTANDING OF YOUR INTENTION
IS. YOU WILL RECOGNIZE ALSO, IN FORESHADOWING YOUR RETURN
TO THE AREA AND IN THE IMPLICATION THAT THE DECLARATION

WILL NOT BE CONCLUDED BY THE END OF BEGIN'S VISIT, THAT THIS ALSO REFLECTS OUR PROPOSED ALTERATION IN STRATEGY.

2. SUGGESTED THEMES: (ALTERING TEXT IN JERUSALEM 531)

-- WE FACE THE BEST OPPORTUNITY IN 30 YEARS FOR DECISIVE MOVEMENT TOWARD A FINAL SETTLEMENT OF THE ISRAELI-ARAB CONFLICT. WE DO NOT INTEND TO MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY. FOR IT TO BE GRASPED, HOWEVER, DIFFICULT DECISIONS MUST BE MADE TO GIVE CONCRETE EXPRESSION TO THE POSSIBILITIES OPENED BY PRESIDENT SADAT'S DRAMATIC TRIP TO JERUSALEM.

-- A NUMBER OF FACTORS MAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY UNIQUE:

-- ISRAEL AND EGYPT HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR DETERMINATION TO REACH A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT AND ARE WORKING ON A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES TO FORM A FRAMEWORK FOR THE NEGOTIATIONS TO THAT END.

-- THE RUSSIANS ARE ON THE SIDELINES AND THE PLO IS WEAK AND DIVIDED (FOR USE ONLY IN JERUSALEM?). THE MODERATES OF THE ARAB WORLD SUPPORT PRESIDENT SADAT'S INITIATIVE. NEITHER ISRAEL NOR THE LARGEST ARAB STATE, THEREFORE, FEELS ITSELF CONSTRAINED BY THE EXTREMISTS IN THE AREA IN MOVING TOWARD A COMPREHENSIVE SETTLEMENT.

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-- THE UNITED STATES CONTINUES TO ACT AS MIDDLEMAN. IT HAS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE PARTIES, WHO AGREE THAT THE AMERICAN ROLE IS ESSENTIAL TO HELPING THEM HAMMER OUT CONCRETE AGREEMENT.

-- AN EXAMPLE OF THIS ROLE WAS THE AGENDA FOR THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETING IN JERUSALEM. WHEN NEITHER EGYPT NOR ISRAEL COULD AGREE ON AN AGENDA FOLLOWING THE SUMMIT AT ISMAILIA, THE UNITED STATES CAME FORWARD WITH AN AGENDA ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH. THAT AGENDA--WHOSE FIRST ITEM IS A DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES--CONTINUES TO BE BASIS OF OUR APPROACH TO ACHIEVING CONCRETE DECISIONS.

-- FOR THE UNITED STATES TO CARRY FORWARD THIS ROLE, IT MUST HAVE COMPLETE UNDERSTANDING OF THE APPROACH OF EACH OF THE PARTIES, AND THEY MUST UNDERSTAND THE U.S. POSITION ON THE KEY ISSUES INVOLVED. PRESIDENT SADAT'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON SERVED THAT PURPOSE WELL, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS WILL SERVE THE SAME PURPOSE. IN THE SPIRIT OF THE DEEP, FRIENDLY AND ENDURING TIES BETWEEN ISRAEL AND US, WE EXPECT TO HAVE THE THOROUGH-GOING TALKS IN A RELAXED ATMOSPHERE WITH THE ISRAELI

PRIME MINISTER (LAST SENTENCE FOR USE IN JERUSALEM?).

-- WE SEE THE TALKS BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN MOVING TOWARDS THE

CONCRETE DECISIONS THAT MUST BE TAKEN IN THE WEEKS JUST AHEAD.

-- IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS, THE UNITED STATES DOES NOT HAVE A BLUEPRINT OR A PLAN. THE SETTLEMENT MUST BE NEGOTIATED BETWEEN THE PARTIES THEMSELVES. IT IS ALSO TRUE, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S., IN ITS OWN RIGHT AS WELL AS IN ITS ROLE AS MEDIATOR, ACCEPTS CERTAIN WELL ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLES, WHICH WE BELIEVE MUST BE THE BASIS FOR A JUST SOLUTION.

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THE U.S. VIEW ON THE SETTLEMENTS ISSUE IS WELL KNOWN, AS IS THE U.S. POSITION THAT A SETTLEMENT MUST BE BASED ON ALL THE PRINCIPLES OF RESOLUTION 242 AND THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM IN ALL ITS ASPECTS MUST BE FOUND. IN DOING SO, THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD BE ENABLED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE DETERMINATION OF THEIR OWN FUTURE. THE UNITED STATES ALSO HAS IDEAS ON HOW THE PARTIES MIGHT PROCEED IN RESOLVING THE BASIC ISSUES WHICH IT DOES PRESENT AT MOMENTS IT JUDGES BEST TO HELP THEM MOVE TOWARDS AGREEMENT.

-- A CASE IN POINT IS THE DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. ATHERTON CLARIFIED THE POSITIONS OF EACH PARTY ON THIS DECLARATION, AND RECEIVED THE PROPOSED LANGUAGE OF EACH. ALTHOUGH DIFFERENCES WERE NARROWED, NEITHER WAS ABLE TO AGREE COMPLETELY TO THE OTHER'S LANGUAGE. THIS HAS, HOWEVER, CONSTITUTED A HIGHLY USEFUL ROUND OF DISCUSSIONS, WHICH LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR RESOLVING THE SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES UNDERLYING THE REMAINING AREAS OF DISAGREEMENT. WE DID NOT EXPECT THIS TASK TO BE AN EASY ONE BUT I AM CONFIDENT THAT--ON MY RETURN TO THE AREA AFTER PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS IN WASHINGTON--THE PARTIES WILL REACH A COMMON UNDERSTANDING.

-- THE PRINCIPAL DIFFERENCES IN THE DECLARATION REMAIN OVER THE PALESTINIAN ISSUE. THEIR DIFFERENCES ARE A MATTER OF PUBLIC RECORD. FOR OUR PART, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE DIFFERENCES ARE SO GREAT THAT A FINAL AGREEMENT CANNOT BE FOUND CONSISTENT WITH ALL THE PRINCIPLES OF 242.

-- IN OUR VIEW THE PRESIDENT'S ASWAN STATEMENT PROVIDES A FRAMEWORK FOR A JUST SOLUTION OF THE PALESTINIAN
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QUESTION. THE CONCRETE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SOLUTION, INCLUDING INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS LOOKING TOWARD AN ULTIMATE SOLUTION, WOULD BE FOR THE PARTIES THEMSELVES TO NEGOTIATE WITHIN THAT FRAMEWORK. GUIDELINES FOR THOSE NEGOTIATIONS ARE THE SECOND AGREED TOPIC TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE POLITICAL COMMITTEE.

-- IN THIS REGARD, WE HAD OPPORTUNITIES DURING THIS VISIT TO DISCUSS WITH EACH OF THE PARTIES HOW THESE GUIDELINES MIGHT EVOLVE. WE EXPECT TO GET FURTHER INTO THIS SUBJECT DURING PRIME MINISTER BEGIN'S TALKS IN WASHINGTON. (WILL SADAT OBJECT TO THIS?).

-- WE HAVE LONG MADE CLEAR ALSO THAT ONE OF THE BASIC ISSUES ALL PARTIES TO THE DISPUTE AGREE MUST BE RESOLVED IS WITHDRAWAL FROM OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL AND ITS NEIGHBORS TO LIVE WITHIN SECURE AND RECOGNIZED BOUNDARIES. THIS IS A PRIME SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE PARTIES.

-- THE UNITED STATES POSITION IS THAT SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS FOR RESOLUTION OF THIS ISSUE MUST BE BASED ON UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTION 242, INCLUDING THE NEED FOR WITHDRAWAL TO TAKE PLACE ON ALL FRONTS OF THE CONFLICT IN THE CONTEXT OF PEACE TREATIES. THIS HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY ALL THE PARTIES FOR YEARS. THIS WAS THE INTENT OF 242 WHEN IT WAS FIRST ADOPTED AND ALL THE CONCERNED GOVERNMENTS RECOGNIZED IT AS SUCH. TREATIES WILL EMBODY AGREEMENT ON NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS AND MUTUALLY ACCEPTED SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS PLUS ANY BORDER MODIFICATIONS BOTH SIDES CAN AGREE ON. WE EXPECT THE PRESIDENT AND THE PRIME MINISTER TO BE GIVING PRIORITY ATTENTION IN THEIR TALKS TO THIS ISSUE.

-- BOTH ISRAEL AND EGYPT WANT JORDAN TO JOIN THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND ATHERTON HAS JUST TALKED WITH KING HUSSEIN IN SECRET

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AMMAN. BECAUSE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SAUDI ARABIA IN SUPPORTING THIS PEACE PROCESS, ATHERTON ALSO WENT TO RIYADH TO INFORM SAUDI ARABIAN OFFICIALS OF OUR APPROACH.

-- MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING HAS ALSO ARISEN IN THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS OVER ISRAELI SETTLEMENTS IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THE AMERICAN POSITION REMAINS: THESE

SETTLEMENTS ARE CONTRARY TO INTERNATIONAL LAW AND SHOULD
NOT HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED. WE CONTINUE TO CONSIDER THEM
AN OBSTACLE TO SUCCESSFUL PEACE NEGOTIATIONS. THEIR
FUTURE IS OBVIOUSLY A SUBJECT FOR NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN
THE PARTIES.

THE "IF PRESSED" SECTION IS OKAY. CHRISTOPHER

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